



Choosing and Using Exercise Equipment

By: Karen E. Tanner

"I'm tired!" "I had a long day!" "Too many things to do and not enough time." "I have no time to go to the gym and workout." These are some very common feelings expressed among the working population. For this very reason, homes are being transformed into fitness centers attempting to make "the workout" a little more convenient. To meet this growing market, manufacturers have abundantly produced home exercise equipment with the intent to meet that demand. The choices available for home exercise equipment are vast and often confusing. Unfortunately, it is easy to buy into a scam or a piece of equipment that could potentially cause more harm than good. Thus, it is important to consider several aspects when purchasing any type of exercise equipment.

Questions to ask:

Will I use this equipment regularly?

Consider your personal commitment regarding the actual use of the purchased equipment. Choose something that you will enjoy. If it collects dust in the corner of the room, you have bought into your own scam. The best piece of equipment in the world does no good for an uncommitted user.

Will the equipment help me meet my goals?

Your goals should not be based solely on the advertising of a particular model. Cutting flab or trimming the waste line are often "quack" statements that will leave you disappointed. Beware of calorie-burning claims. A reasonably fit person will burn 400-600 calories/hour with aerobic exercise.

Is the equipment well made?

Most equipment looks good to the naked eye. Wear comfortable clothes to the store and put the machine to your own test. It should feel sturdy and durable. Note any noises or abnormalities and ask the salesperson why this is occurring.

Is it comfortable?

Regardless of how well the equipment is made, if you don't feel comfortable you won't use it. Pay attention to how your joints, lower back, and muscles feel. The seat should be comfortable for long workouts. Handles and bars should be padded. Test each type of equipment and choose the one that feels the best. Some equipment works arms and legs, but that might not be comfortable to you. Since you are going to be the one using it make sure it doesn't cause you discomfort. Finally, note the ease of using the controls and adjustments. Are they accessible?

Do I have room for it?

If you have to store or disassemble the equipment, it will only deter you from using it.

What's the best deal?

Expect to spend at least a few hundred dollars. The lower priced models are usually very basic. When the cost increases, so do the features that are available. Some machines will measure heart rate, calories burned, time elapsed while also offering programmed workouts.

Does the company have a service department?

Know that there is no such thing as the perfect product. Thus, you will need to research the manufacturer that produces the line of equipment you wish to purchase. Manufacturers should ensure quality control in the building and servicing of their products. This includes prompt and professional service. Ask the salesperson these important questions regarding service:

1. Who will service the product? Will the service be in house or by contract?
2. Have you had any problems with X model? What types of problems?
3. How long will it take for the service department to respond?

Is it safe?

Consider what the exercise equipment will do to your body. If it states that it works your "abs," then what does it do for your lower back? If it claims to increase your "pecs," consider the stress it will place on your rotator cuff.

Keep in mind that selling exercise equipment is a market just like any other product. Not all exercise equipment is safe. For this reason, ask questions and research into the piece of equipment you would like to purchase. Just like buying a car, you want the most for your money, without compromising your safety and health. These are difficult answers to discover on your own and that is when you can seek the opinion of those in the health profession. The staff at the KSC Fitness Centers and RehabWorks will be glad to help.

References:

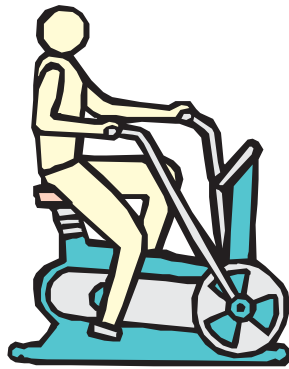
www.aaos.org/wordhtml/press/sciwrite/exereq.htm (American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons)

www.fitness.talstar.com/Treadmill.html (Talstar)

www.mercycic.com/healthtopic/archives/O998.html (Mercy Hospital)

www.tenethealth.com/corporate/your_health/yh_wellness/fitness_aug97.html

<http://www.physsportsmed.com/issues/1997/01jan/eqpt.htm> (Physician and SportsMedicine)



TO MINIMIZE PAPER COSTS,
PLEASE ROUTE THIS NEWSLETTER TO ALL EMPLOYEES AT THIS MAIL STOP.



For Your Spirit.

Learn to Laugh More



Laughing more often is one of the easiest ways to live healthier. It's a built-in medicine the body uses to stay healthy. When you laugh, it relaxes muscles, lowers blood pressure and releases endorphins in the body to make you feel good. Ask yourself these questions to see if you need to add humor to your life:

- Do you often go throughout the day without laughing?
- Do you find it difficult to let go of a stressful thought?
- Do you become angry when under stress?
- Do you deny or block out memories of embarrassing moments?
- Do you tend to get offended or irritated easily?
- Do you use humor to make fun of or embarrass others?
- Do you take yourself too seriously?

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, you may need to lighten up. Expecting yourself and others to be perfect and for everything to go your way is not only unrealistic, but also unhealthy. Be the first to laugh at yourself, and look for the positive things that are happening in your life.

Source: Total Wellness



KSC Fitness Center Activities

MAY

National Fitness Month

May 19th: American Red Cross will be hosting a blood drive in the O&C Aerobics Studio.

May 29th: Both Fitness Centers will be closed for Memorial Day.

JUNE

National Dairy Month

Desktop Yoga: This seminar was so popular, we've decided to offer it again! Are you suffering from aches and pains associated with working at a computer or sitting at a desk? Is work causing you

stress? Then "Desktop Yoga" is perfect for you. You will learn easy breathing techniques and yoga exercises that can be done at your desk. "Desktop Yoga" is a new and innovative form of yoga that can help solve everyday problems. Please call the KSC Fitness Centers at 867-7829 for locations and to sign up.

For Your Mind...

"Spring" Into Action



The sun shines brighter, the days grow longer - it's springtime again! Are you ready for it? For many people, winter is a time of hibernation - a time when vital systems slow. Year after year, spring catches them by surprise, and they're halfway through it before they come up to speed. This slow start puts them behind and, before they know it, it's fall again.

Now is the time to "spring" into action. Now is the time for a rebirth of hopes and dreams of years past. It's the time for a new beginning. If you're a gardener, it may be too late to mail away for seeds. Go to your nearest garden center today if you hope to get a crop in the ground. Avoid waiting until the first warm day and wishing you had seeds to plant. If you want a crop, you have to get the seeds now.

If you're not a gardener, what kind of seeds do you need to make your dreams come true this year? What will you have to plant now in order to reap what you want later?

Seeds are only part of it. The tools to plant the seeds, and the ground to plant them in, have to be carefully prepared. Spending a little time each week throughout the winter working on your tools gets the work done with minimum effort. The phrase "steady and slow makes the work go" is true and it doesn't only apply to gardening.

Are your tools in good shape or have they rusted during the winter? Your two most basic tools are your mind and your body. What kind of condition are they in? Start making plans. Get your mind active. Shake off those cobwebs the winter doldrums caused. How's your body looking? Get out a pair of summer slacks you put away last fall, or if you're really daring, last year's bathing suit. Try it on. If it doesn't quite fit, you still have time - if you start now - to change the shape of what hits the beach this year. Take it slow and prepare yourself a little bit each day.

Spring is time for rebirth - a time for all of nature to begin anew. You're a part of nature and, with your help, spring can bring about a brand new you!

WEBSITE: <http://fitness.ksc.nasa.gov>

Gym-ing by the book

Lessons in etiquette

If you've recently joined the KSC Fitness Centers or another local health club, you may find the environment intimidating. Learning the unwritten rules can help you feel a lot more at home at the health club — and help you make friends while avoiding nasty stares.

Yes, even at a health club — a place where skimpy attire, profuse sweating and mild grunting are perfectly acceptable — there are rules of etiquette.

If you come across a situation that you're not sure how to handle, simply ask one of the trainers on duty. Here's a rundown of the courtesies expected at a gym:

Don't sit on a machine you're not using or when you're between sets. Let a fellow gym member "work in" (alternate) with you. If someone else is using equipment that you have your eye on, feel free to say, "Mind if I work in with you?" It's perfectly acceptable for you to change the weight setting or seat level; just be sure to restore them after your set.

Keep your grunting to a minimum. Sure, a weight room isn't a public library, but it's not a championship wrestling arena, either. Loud noises not only distract other gym members but also alerts them to the fact that you're lifting more weight than you can handle.

Don't tote around your gym bag. That's what lockers are for. Gym bags on the floor are a safety hazard, plus they take up space, and the gym's usually crowded enough as it is.

Don't drop your weights. When you're finished using a set of dumbbells, gently place them on the ground. Dropping the weights can be very dangerous; the weights can bounce around and break someone's toes.

Keep your sweat to yourself. Carry a towel and wipe off the equipment when you're finished.

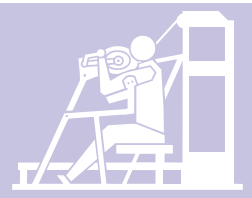
Unload your weight bar. Don't assume that the next person who comes along has the ability or desire to clean up after you. For some, just lifting a 45-pound weight from the bar can be a strain.

Observe the gym's time limits on the cardiovascular equipment. Many clubs restrict you to 20 or 30 minutes on the treadmills, bikes and stairclimbers during rush hour.

Return your weights to the rack. If you leave dumbbells on the floor, someone may trip over them, or the weights may roll onto somebody's toes. Be sure to place them back in their proper spots. No one should have to waste 10 minutes hunting for the 15-pound dumbbells, only to find them sitting between the 40s and the 50s.

Exercise courtesy in the locker room. Don't take up three lockers and spread your clothing over an entire bench, forcing other people to put on their socks while standing up.

Be courteous in exercise classes. Don't show up late or distract the class by creating your own workout routine. And play nice, there's room for everyone!



Fiber in the Diet

By: Billy Folkes

Fiber is a very important aspect of anyone's diet. Fiber is the part of food that is not absorbed by the body. There are many advantages to a diet with adequate fiber. For instance studies have shown that a balanced diet containing different kinds of fiber can help regulate the bowels, lower the risk of certain forms of cancer, and aid in the prevention of heart disease. High fiber meals seem to remain in the digestive system longer. This will give the feeling of fullness without the extra calories. A diet high in fiber also helps prevent many disorders of the digestive system including hemorrhoids, diverticulosis, irritable bowel syndrome and other inflammations and infections.

Fiber is broken down into two categories, insoluble and soluble fiber. Insoluble fibers have been shown to increase stool size and speed up the passage of foods through the stomach and intestines. By speeding up the passage of foods one is decreasing the time the stool is in contact with the colon. One theory suggests that this would reduce the contact of carcinogens with the colon wall. Insoluble fibers may also increase the binding and excretion of the sex linked hormones, testosterone and estrogen, from within the intestines. This is very important because of the links between excessive amounts of sex hormones and certain types of cancer, specifically prostate and colon cancer. Sources of insoluble fiber include some vegetables, wheat bran, and whole grains.

Soluble fiber is also very important. These fibers are the best source for inhibiting cholesterol absorption from the small intestine and for slowing down glucose absorption from the small intestine. By inhibiting cholesterol absorption one can reduce their overall cholesterol level thus reducing one's risk of cardiovascular disease. Sources of soluble fiber include peas, nuts, lentils, barley, oat bran, oatmeal, psyllium seeds (found in some breakfast cereals), soybean, legumes, fruits, and vegetables.

Increase the fiber in your diet gradually. The recommended fiber intake should be between 20 and 35 grams per day. Too much fiber too soon can cause cramps and bloating. Since fiber absorbs water, be sure to drink plenty of water and other fluids with it. Extremely high amounts of fiber can deplete the body of certain vitamins and minerals. However, with a reasonable amount of fiber in your diet one can reap substantial benefits and enjoy some tasty and satisfying food in the process.

Ways to increase the fiber in your current diet:

- Eat at least five servings of fruits and vegetables each day
- Replace white bread with whole-grain breads and cereals.
- Eat brown rice instead of white rice.
- Eat bran cereal for breakfast. Check labels on the packages for the amounts of dietary fiber in each brand. Some cereals may have less fiber than you think.
- Add 1 and 1/4 cup of wheat bran (miller's bran) to foods such as cooked cereal, applesauce, or meat loaf.
- Eat cooked beans each week.
- Eat more of the following foods- apples (with skin), oranges, broccoli, cauliflower, berries, pears, brussels sprouts, lettuce, figs, prunes, carrots, potatoes, bran muffins, oatmeal, multiple grain cereals (cooked or dry), brown rice, popcorn, and 100% whole wheat bread.

Wake Up to the Dangers of Caffeine

By: Michele Rahija

Do you need caffeine in the morning to help you get through the day? In the United States, over 80 percent of adults consume caffeine in some form. The most common sources of caffeine are coffee, tea, and cocoa. Caffeine is the most popular psychoactive drug in use today. Each day, the average adult ingests approximately 280 milligrams of caffeine, the amount found in two large cups of coffee. At this level of consumption, caffeine will increase alertness and produce a sense of well being. It cuts down on feelings of fatigue and boredom, and allows you to maintain physically exhausting and repetitive tasks. However, higher doses of caffeine can produce negative short and long term effects.

Short Term Effects

Larger doses of caffeine, especially when given to a non-user can produce headaches, jitteriness, abnormally rapid heartbeat (tachycardia), convulsions and even delirium. It increases muscular tremors and increases general metabolism due to increase in activity and raised body temperature. The rate of breathing increases, as does urination, the levels of fatty acids in the blood and gastric acid in the stomach. Caffeine can also cause effects on sleep. Taken before bedtime, it usually delays sleep onset, shortens overall sleep time, and reduces the "depth" of sleep. After using caffeine, sleepers are more easily aroused move more during sleep and report a reduction in the quality of sleep.

Long Term Effects

The long term effects caused by caffeine do not appear evident when regular caffeine use is below 650 mg a day-equivalent to about eight or nine average cups of coffee. Above this level, users may suffer from chronic insomnia, persistent anxiety, depression, and stomach ulcers. Caffeine use appears to be associated with irregular heartbeats, may raise cholesterol levels, but there is no firm evidence that it causes heart disease and cancer. In women, excessive caffeine consumption may aggravate the symptoms of pre-menstrual syndrome (PMS). When caffeine is frequently consumed, a tolerance then forms, which will cause an individual to ingest more caffeine in order for the same effects to occur. Withdrawal symptoms can occur when people stop taking caffeine-based drugs or drinking caffeinated beverages. Symptoms of irritability, headaches, and even mild depression can occur. The Journal of the American Medical Association reports a disease called caffeinism, with symptoms of appetite loss, weight loss, irritability, insomnia, feelings of flushing, chills, and sometimes of low fever. Also, The Center for Science in the Public Interest advises pregnant woman to stay away from caffeine since studies have shown that caffeine causes birth defects in animal tests and interferes with DNA replication.

Helpful Tips to Reduce Your Caffeine Intake

- First, find out just how much caffeine you drink in an average day. The amount may surprise you. Keep a log of how many servings of caffeine-containing products you have in a day. Many soft drinks such as colas, Mountain Dew, and Surge contain large amounts of caffeine.
- Begin by cutting back on or substituting one or two servings with a caffeine-free product. Continue to reduce your intake by substituting or cutting out an additional serving every other day.

- If you can't give up your coffee, dilute the fresh brew with decaffeinated coffee.
- Try a different beverage altogether. Fruit juices and caffeine-free soft drinks offer a refreshing change. Caffeine-free herbal teas such as peppermint and chamomile can help soothe an anxiety-ridden nervous system.
- Don't forget good old ice water. Try it with a slice or two of lemon or lime.

Ask Miss Muscle

Q: When should I train abdominals (abs)?

A: The optimal time to train abs comes down to personal preference. If your abs are a lagging bodypart, you need to prioritize your ab training. If you're tired after a hard workout, you'll have trouble dedicating sufficient energy to train abs. Try working your abs first. Many ab exercises can be done at home and only take a few minutes.

Q: How often should I train abs?

A: Abs are like any other muscle group that requires stimulation and then rest in order to grow, and they can be over trained. However, abs do seem to recover more quickly than larger muscle groups. A good rule a thumb is that if your abs are still sore from a previous workout, they aren't ready to be worked again.

Q: How many repetitions (reps) should I perform?

A: The abs, like other muscles, respond to overload and must be challenged in new and different ways for gains to continue. You should add resistance to your ab exercises (or choose more difficult movements) as your abs grow stronger to continue the process of overload and development.

To build size you'll want to limit your reps to no more than 25 for three sets. Once you can achieve this number with good form (and getting a good "crunch" at the top of each movement), you'll need to gradually increase the resistance. With enough resistance you'll do as few as 8 reps per set.

If you're training for muscular endurance without building considerable size, do high-rep sets. Because you can't spot-reduce, don't expect this to build definition in your abs. That more strongly relates to nutrition and fat burning aerobic activities.

Cardiovascular training helps burn calories and stored body fat and increase your metabolism. Remember also that nutrition plays a crucial role in defining your midsection.

